

UC Regents Face Difficult Decisions on Cutting Costs



By Rachel Gross

[UC Berkeley Daily Californian](#): Drastic cost-cutting measures across campuses and in the UC Office of the President, some of which will affect students, are looking unavoidable for the UC Board of Regents.

On Thursday, the board delved deeper into some of the upcoming actions facing the university, including salary reductions, employee furloughs and fee raises.

In November, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau proposed that individual campuses use their discretion in determining tuition fee increases. However, at the meeting, he withdrew the proposal, saying it would be "inappropriate" at a time when all students are facing significant increases.

Regent and Lt. Gov. John Garamendi, who is planning a bid for governor in 2010, voiced the strongest opposition against raising fees, saying the money could be raised more efficiently by implementing a statewide oil severance tax.

"The legislature decided to not increase other fees by some amount or another, but decided to instead impose on students what could arguably be called a \$700 tax on every student," he said. "That is a particularly stupid tax policy."

If the regents' decision in May is in line with state budget recommendations, undergraduate fees will rise by almost \$700 annually, from \$7,126 to \$7,788.

Lucero Chavez, president of the UC Student Association, said it will be difficult to get students on board with fee increases when they do not see tangible improvements on campus.

"The UC is a leader on a lot of things, but high fees is not something we want to be a leader on. We hope that we're not going to overburden students this year," she said, adding that she would be \$200,000 in debt when she graduates from Boalt Hall School of Law.

At upper levels of university management, severe cuts have already been made. The Office of the President has scaled back by 19 percent since 2007-08, cutting \$6 million by tightening entertainment and travel expenses alone.

"We have an interest in not embarrassing ourselves," said UC President Mark Yudof. "I don't know if you know, but this office was not well managed financially (before the cuts)."

While recognizing the need to raise fees in light of the university's \$450

million deficit over this year and next, Student Regent D'Artagnan Scorza said he worried student fees were just the tip of the iceberg.

"What would prevent CEOs or any section in the university from saying we have a need and we have to assess additional amounts of fees on students to meet these needs?" he asked. "What process is in place to make sure these additional fees won't pile up?"

But Yudof said it was unrealistic to expect the university to maintain educational standards without sacrifice.

"I don't know what to tell you," he said. "Everyone's going to have to pay some price. It will be impossible to maintain the quality of university, keep everyone employed, not employ furloughs-it's impossible."

Emily Grospe of the Daily Californian contributed to this report.